



THE **INTERNSHIP** **GUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW
FROM BEGINNING TO END

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INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIPS

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships serve as a hands-on educational experience that combines classroom knowledge with real-world practical application and skills within a professional environment. You will have an opportunity to gain practical skills while establishing connections with professionals in various fields. Internships also provide a trial run to gauge your interest in a specific field before committing to it.

WHY ARE INTERNSHIPS IMPORTANT?

Internships offer you job-related experience before graduation. During internships, you will sharpen various skills, whether technical, interpersonal, or personal, which ultimately make you stand out as a strong contender when you start applying for jobs.

HOW MANY INTERNSHIPS SHOULD YOU HAVE?

Having more than one internship on your resume shows future employers that you are passionate about your career and gaining new experiences in an industry.

Each internship gives you new skillsets and knowledge, and increases your connections to different professionals. If you have the opportunity to complete multiple internships before your full-time job search, you will be a well-rounded applicant who is more attractive to employers than applicants with one or no internship experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

66% of interns land a full-time job from their internship site? This is because employers use internships to recruit early for entry-level positions at their organizations.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers 2025 Internship & Co-op Report

WHEN SHOULD YOU DO AN INTERNSHIP?

You should start strategizing as early as your freshman year.

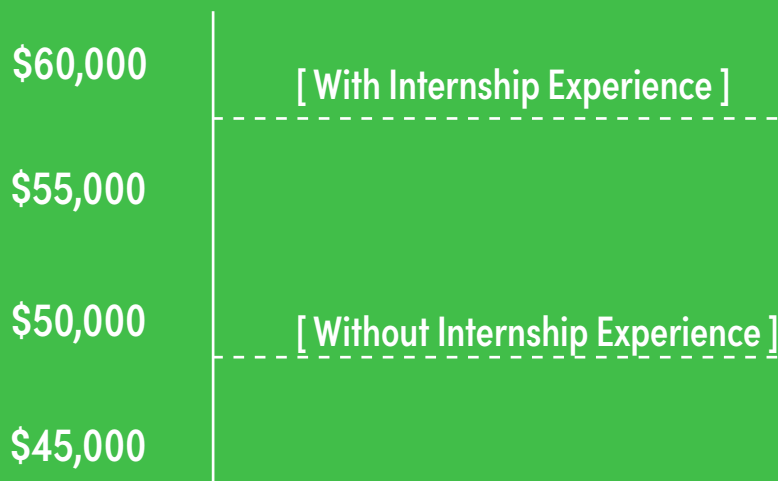
1. Focus on industries that interest you and start researching using [Vault](#)
2. Work on your resume using [Toppel Templates](#)
3. Begin researching [Toppel's website](#) for all your career needs



Students who complete a paid internship are *2x as likely* to have a job post-graduation.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers

IMPACT OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE ON STARTING SALARY



Students with internship experience have a **9-12% higher salary** than those without internship experience.

- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS

However, it's not just any internships. It's PAID internships that create these differences. The Toppel Career Center encourages you to complete an internship, but we understand there are barriers that may prevent you from doing so, including pay.

We support the National Association of Colleges and Employers' position statement on unpaid internships, which calls for "legislation to

eliminate unpaid internships and provide support for employers in converting unpaid internships to paid internships" because they "are a barrier to achieving equity and opportunity for all college students."

Now that you have some insight on why internships are important, let's look at how you can set yourself up for success!

PRE-INTERNSHIP

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP SEARCH

Before diving into the search for an internship, it's wise to ask yourself several key questions to ensure you're targeting opportunities that align with your goals and expectations. Here are some questions to consider:

1. What are my career goals?

Understand what you want to achieve in the short term and how this internship fits into your broader career aspirations.

If you are unclear about or are having trouble forming your career goals, [Career Explorer](#) is a career matching platform that helps people find their ideal career.

2. What skills do I want to develop?

Identify the specific skills or experiences you hope to gain from an internship, whether they are technical skills, essential skills, industry-specific knowledge, or something else.

[Job Market Data](#) is an excellent tool that allows you to explore potential careers by giving you access to employment trends, top employers, salary data, key skills and core competencies, sample job titles, core tasks, and more for any given occupation.

3. What type of company culture do I thrive in?

Think about the work environment that brings out your best performance and makes you feel fulfilled. Do you prefer a structured corporate setting, a startup's dynamic atmosphere, or something in between?

4. What are my financial needs and limitations?

Determine if you need a paid internship or if you're willing to pursue unpaid opportunities. Consider the cost of living in the location where the internship is located and how it aligns with your budget.

[The Mark and Maureen Angelo Family Endowment Fund](#) at the Toppel Career Center (also known as The Angelo Family Endowment Fund) aims to support University of Miami undergraduate students as they pursue unpaid or underpaid high-quality internships during the summer that foster their career exploration by reducing financial challenges.

5. What is my availability?

Evaluate your schedule and determine how much time you can commit to an internship. Consider whether you're looking for a full-time, part-time, or remote position.

6. What networking opportunities do I want to pursue?

Explore career paths and connect with alumni industry professionals on [Cane2Cane](#). All UM students and alumni can browse through a community of professionals based on industry, major, or an area of interest and start conversations for career advice, mentorship, and guidance.

Use [LinkedIn jobs](#) and the alumni tool to harness the power of your network and get hired.

Reach out to professors, alumni, career services, and professionals in your field for advice, referrals, and potential internship opportunities that may be hidden or not advertised.

7. What are my non-negotiables?

Identify any factors that are essential for you in an internship, such as location, mentorship opportunities, potential for growth, or alignment with your values.

8. How will this internship contribute to my resume/portfolio?

Assess how the internship will enhance your professional profile and contribute to your long-term career prospects.

9. What do I hope to learn about myself?

Consider the personal growth and self-discovery you aim to achieve through this experience, whether it's gaining confidence, overcoming challenges, or discovering new interests.

By reflecting on these questions, you can better define your internship search criteria and find opportunities that will help you achieve your goals and maximize your learning and growth.

HOW MANY INTERNSHIPS SHOULD YOU APPLY TO?

The number of internships you should apply to each week or month can vary depending on various factors such as your field of study, the competitiveness of the internships you're interested in, and your personal availability. However, a good rule of thumb is to aim for quality over quantity. Focus on thoroughly researching each opportunity and tailoring your application to match the requirements. Continue to apply until you accept an offer.

Here are some general tips:

1. Research: Spend time researching companies and positions that align with your interests and career goals. Look for internships that offer valuable experiences and opportunities for growth. Use [Vault](#) to research company and internship rankings.

2. Customize Your Applications: Tailor your resume, cover letter, and any other required materials to each internship application. Highlight relevant skills, experiences, and achievements that demonstrate your qualifications for the position by referring to keywords in the job description.

3. Stay Organized: Keep track of application deadlines, requirements, and follow-up tasks using a spreadsheet or organizational tool. This will help you manage your applications more effectively and avoid missing important deadlines.

5. Balance: While it's important to apply to multiple internships to increase your chances of success, don't spread yourself too thin. Focus on a manageable number of applications each week or month that allows you to thoroughly research and customize each one.

6. Continuous Improvement: Keep refining your resume, cover letter, and interview skills based on feedback and experiences. Each application process is an opportunity to learn and improve.

Ultimately, the goal is to find internships that will provide you with valuable learning experiences and help you advance in your career path.

SMALL VS. LARGE COMPANIES?

	Interning at a Small Company	Interning at a Large Company
PROS	<p>1. Hands-On Experience: In smaller companies, interns often work closely with experienced professionals and even top-level executives. This close-knit environment allows interns to gain hands-on experience and exposure to various aspects of the business.</p> <p>2. Visibility and Recognition: Interns in small companies tend to stand out more and may receive greater recognition for their contributions. They might even have the chance to take on significant responsibilities and make a noticeable impact on projects.</p> <p>3. Wearing Multiple Hats: Interns at small companies often wear multiple hats, working across different departments and roles. This offers a broader understanding of how the business operates.</p> <p>4. Less Structured Program: Small companies may have less structured internship programs compared to larger corporations, allowing room for more freedom and flexibility.</p>	<p>1. Structured Programs: Large companies usually have well-established internship programs with structured training, mentorship, and development opportunities. Interns may benefit from formalized onboarding processes and access to extensive resources.</p> <p>2. Networking Opportunities: Interns in large companies often have the chance to network with a larger pool of professionals within the organization. This can lead to valuable connections for future career opportunities.</p> <p>3. Specialized Roles: Large companies may offer internships in specialized roles or departments, allowing interns to focus on a specific area of interest. This can provide in-depth exposure to a particular field or industry.</p> <p>4. Brand Recognition: Interning at a well-known, large company can enhance one's resume and credibility in the job market. The brand recognition associated with large corporations may open doors to future career prospects.</p>
CONS	<p>Potential for small companies not being able to pay interns, potentially lack professionals who have the experience or time to mentor.</p>	<p>Not a lot of flexibility to gain experience in different areas/departments. May get lost in the shuffle. Little to no access to top-level executives.</p>

Ultimately, the choice between interning at a small or large company depends on individual preferences, career goals, and the type of experience one seeks. Small companies offer a more intimate and dynamic environment, while large companies provide structure, resources, and brand prestige.

TIMELINES FOR APPLYING TO DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES

TECH INDUSTRY



Summer Internships: August to January, sometimes earlier for large firms. Major tech internships often open in late summer or early fall, and some competitive roles begin as early as August or September, with deadlines that can fall before winter ends. Startups may be later.

CONSULTING INDUSTRY



Summer Internships: April – August (in year prior to internship). Top consulting firms commonly open in late spring and often have deadlines in late summer or even earlier for some firms and programs. Major firms can open very early and fill fast.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION INDUSTRY



Summer Internships: October-March, sometimes through spring. Winter to early spring openings are plausible for many organizations, especially smaller or more flexible employers. Some outlets also post in the fall. There is more variation in this industry, as smaller outlets may post later.



FINANCE INDUSTRY

Summer Internships: March-October, sometimes earlier (in year prior to internship). Finance has among the earliest recruiting cycles. Many finance internships, especially investment banking and related competitive roles, open in early spring in the year prior to when the internship will take place.



HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Summer Internships: September-January. Applications open in the fall with summer starts applies to many programs, though there is more variation by employer and some deadlines can be earlier than November-December.



ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

Summer Internships: September – January. Applications open in the fall semester for programs starting in the summer. These are competitive and early application is essential.

Internship timelines vary widely by company and industry, and many competitive programs recruit a year or more in advance. Students should always check each employer's deadline, because some internships are posted and filled on a rolling basis.

DISAPPOINTMENT OR REJECTION IN THE INTERNSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Looking for an internship is a lot of work. You may find that you submit a lot of applications and not hear back. It's understandable to feel some disappointment.

Practicing patience during the college internship application process can be challenging, but it's essential for maintaining your mental well-being and staying focused. Here are some tips to help you cultivate patience:

Set Realistic Expectations: Understand that the application process can take time, and there may be delays in hearing back from employers. Set realistic timelines for yourself and acknowledge that it's a gradual process.

Internship Application Goals: Set a goal for the number of internships you can realistically apply to each week.

Stay Organized: Keep track of the internship applications you've submitted, deadlines, and any follow-up actions required. Having a structured approach can help alleviate anxiety about the waiting period.

Focus on Self-Improvement: Use the waiting period to enhance your skills and qualifications. Take online courses, volunteer, or participate in relevant extracurricular activities that will strengthen your resume and make you a more competitive candidate.

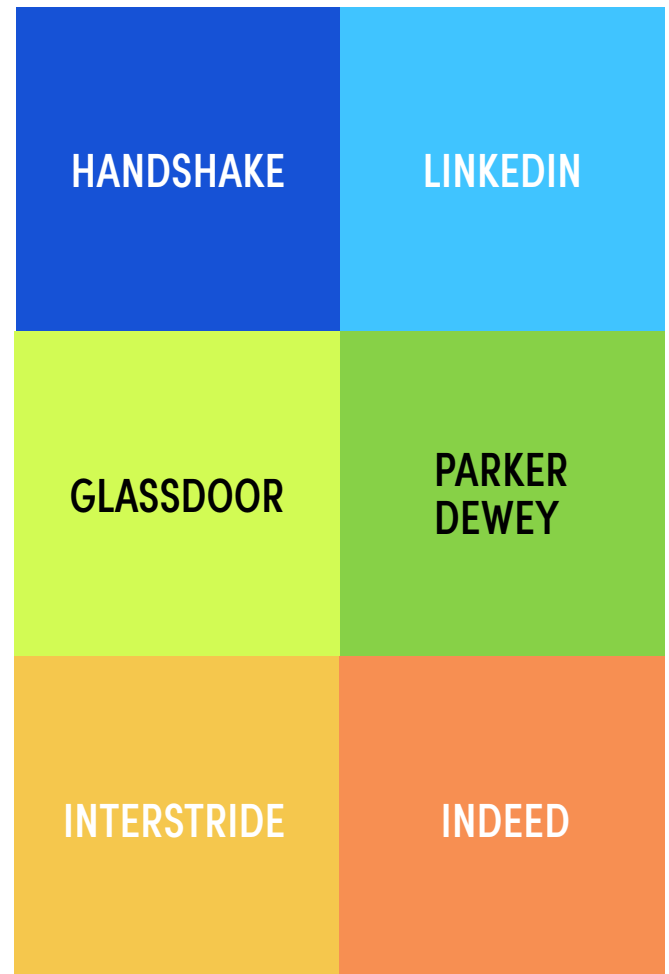
Network: Reach out to professionals in your field of interest through networking platforms like [LinkedIn](#) and [Cane2Cane](#) or attending industry events. Building connections can open new opportunities and provide valuable insights into the industry.

Seek Support: Don't hesitate to lean on friends, family, or mentors for support during the application process. Talking to others about your experiences and concerns can help alleviate stress and provide perspective.

Keep Applying: Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Continue to search for and apply to other internship opportunities while waiting to hear back from previous applications. This increases your chances of success and provides alternatives if your initial applications don't pan out.

PUBLIC JOB MARKET: WHERE TO SEARCH FOR ADVERTISED INTERNSHIPS?

Good news! There are many credible [sites](#) you can use for your internship search including:



Look at industry specific platforms based on your career interests.

Which sites have you already used for your internship search?

[Vault](#) is a resource to help you identify ideal internship programs by giving you access to exclusive company and internship rankings, in-depth employer profiles, and valuable employee/intern reviews across a wide range of industries. Check out their career and industry guides for deeper insights into specific industries aligned with your interests!

Also, check out currently open job and internship listings from [Handshake](#).

Before moving forward, don't forget to stay organized by creating a job search tracker. [Rain](#) provides a great application tracker tool.

HIDDEN JOB MARKET: WHERE TO SEARCH FOR INTERNSHIPS NOT ADVERTISED?

You may have heard that many jobs are never posted or that a referral generates more results than a cold call/application. This is called the hidden job market.

Below is a list of possible professional networks, social media groups, events, and opportunities you may plan on using to help you access the hidden job market.

- **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ASSOCIATIONS**
- **VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS**
- **ON-CAMPUS RECRUITERS**
- **COMPANY INFO SESSIONS**
- **GUEST SPEAKER/PANEL EVENTS**
- **UM FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATOR CONTACTS**
- **LINKEDIN CONTACTS**
- **CANE2CANE ALUMNI MENTORS**
- **LINKEDIN ALUMNI**
- **CLASSMATES AND/OR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

When applying for internships, you will notice that they each have specific requirements, some more than others. This list of requirements will serve as a starting point to help you prepare for your search:

Academic Level: Does the internship require you to be in a specific year in college (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, grad student) to be eligible?

Major/Degree: Does the internship require you to be enrolled in a specific major or degree (Bachelor's, Master's, etc.)?

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement: Does the internship require a minimum GPA to be eligible? Do you meet the GPA requirements?

Does GPA matter when searching for an internship?

Although your GPA does not always dictate how you will perform in a job, many employers still require a minimum GPA for internships and use GPAs as a screening tool. It is important to look into your specific industry to determine the ideal GPA for an internship in the field.

Skill/Industry Experience: Does the internship require experience with a specific skill, task, or subject area? Which skills or experience do you have? Which skills or experience are you missing?

Hours: How many hours will you be required to dedicate to your internship per week? Is the internship full-time or part-time?

REQUIRED & ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Are there any skills listed in your ideal internship descriptions that you would like to gain or strengthen? What skills are you missing?

To help you gain relevant knowledge and skills across the areas you identified for FREE, we encourage you to complete a virtual company project/job simulation on [Forage](#) and on-demand video training on [LinkedIn Learning](#) (Free for students using UM login).

Also, [Parker Dewey](#) provides students with access to listings for micro-internships, which can help you showcase your skills and build your portfolio, while completing a project for a company.

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP INTERVIEW

Congratulations on reaching the internship interview stage! Here are eight essential tips offered by our [Forage](#) partners to help you prepare and succeed during your internship interviews.

1. Research Thoroughly
2. Prepare for Common Questions
3. Highlight Relevant Experiences
4. Show You're a Quick Learner
5. Get Interview Logistics Right
6. Ask Thoughtful Questions
7. Be Honest
8. Show Your Personality

PREPARING TO ANSWER INTERNSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[Big Interview](#) offers a list of interview questions, including specific interview questions for internships and general interview questions you'll probably be asked. Once logged into Big Interview, click on "practice" then "practice sets" to see top interview questions based on your selected categories.

Use the STAR method to frame your responses:

**S**

SITUATION

Describe the situation so that your interviewer understands the context. There's no need to be too detailed. Providing a general context with the most important facts should be enough. This should take around 15% of the total answer time.

**T**

TASK

Briefly describe your specific task or responsibility in that situation. No need to go into detail here either, just make sure to highlight what your role was. This is usually the shortest part and should account for 10% of the whole answer.

**A**

ACTION

You need to be as detailed as possible when describing what actions you took to achieve something. Describe what you did with the most important facts — step by step. The Action part should take up around 60% of your answer.

**R**

RESULT

Here, you should mention the tangible results of your actions. Ideally, these will be quantifiable data (% , \$), but you can also include qualitative things (bonuses, positive feedback, promotions, awards).

PREPARING YOUR OUTFIT CHOICE FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP INTERVIEW

First impressions matter, and your attire plays a significant role in how you are perceived during an internship interview. Your outfit choice for an interview will vary based on industry and even company. Even if your internship is conducted through Zoom, it is still important to follow these tips.

The Toppel Career Center is committed to helping you obtain affordable professional attire through our various partnerships with MyCareerCloset, JCPenney, and Dress for Success/Suited for Success. Learn more [here](#).

Here are some key tips to ensure you look polished and professional for your interviews:

GENERAL GUIDELINES

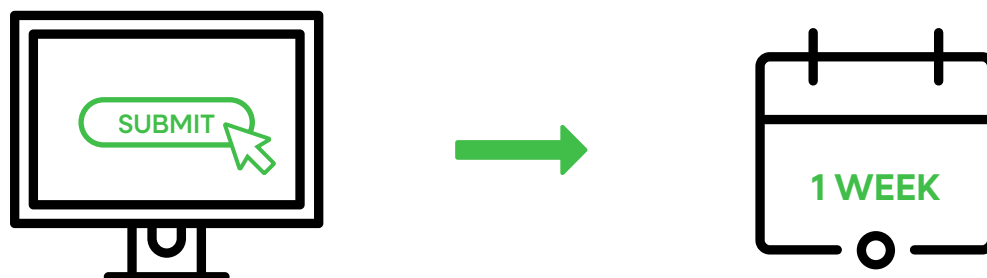
Research the Company Culture: Research your specific industry and organization to understand the attire trends of that field. Tailor your outfit to fit the company's dress code. Business formal is typically safe, but some industries may favor business casual.

Keep It Neat: Ensure your clothes are clean, pressed, and fit well.

Do's	Don'ts
<p>Choose Professional Attire: For business formal, opt for a suit and tie, a pantsuit or a professional dress. For business casual, consider slacks and a button-down shirt, or a blouse with dress pants or a skirt.</p>	<p>Wear Casual Clothes: Avoid jeans, t-shirts, hoodies, ripped clothes, and sneakers unless the company instructs you otherwise.</p>
<p>Pay Attention to Details: Wear polished shoes and lint roll your clothes.</p>	<p>Overdo Accessories: Keep accessories minimal and avoid anything too flashy or distracting.</p>
<p>Keep It Simple: Neutral colors and classic styles are always a good choice. Avoid overly bright or distracting patterns.</p>	<p>Forget Grooming: Ensure your nails and hair are clean, and avoid heavy perfumes or colognes.</p>

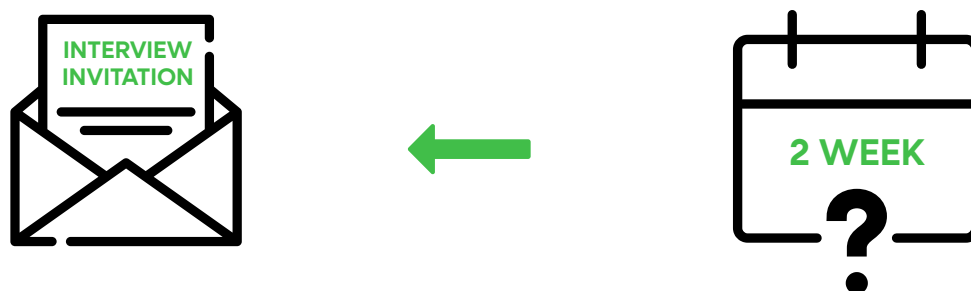
DECISION GUIDE FROM APPLICATION TO OFFER

We know the process of searching for an internship can feel overwhelming at times, but we've got you covered with a useful decision guide to walk you through the process after you apply for an internship.



Awesome! Now, give yourself a pat on the back for putting yourself out there. Don't stop, though! Keep applying for other internship opportunities.

Haven't heard back yet after a week? Don't stress! It's completely normal for the process to take some time. Give it a bit more time and keep an eye on your inbox. Also, make sure your voice mailbox is not full in case they call you and you're not available at the moment.



Yay! Congrats! Now, it's time to prepare. Research the company across several platforms (Handshake, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc.), practice your interviewing skills and elevator pitch, and get ready to ace your interview. Don't forget to take advantage of Toppel's [interview preparation resources](#).

Still no updates? It might be a good idea to follow up with the employer through a brief email. Keep it short, sweet, and enthusiastic about the opportunity.


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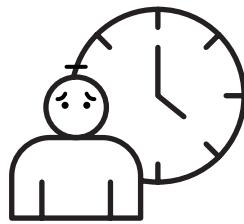


Phew, you did it! Take a deep breath and send a thank-you email to your interviewers. It shows professionalism and gratitude.



Wondering how to write a thank you email? Check out this guide: [How To Write A Post-Interview Thank You Email \[Tips + Examples \] by Big Interview](#)

WAITING FOR DECISION



The **anticipation period** between the interview and offer can be nerve-racking but try to stay positive and patient. Consider following up after a week if you haven't heard back.



It happens to the best of us. Take this as a learning opportunity. Ask for feedback from the employer if possible and keep pushing forward. For more tips on how to stay motivated, cope with rejections, and move forward, refer to step 7 in the [8-Step Job Search Toolkit](#). Your perfect internship is still out there waiting for you!



Congratulations, you did it! Take some time to celebrate your hard work paying off. Then, review the offer carefully and respond promptly with your decision. Feel free to meet with a career coach at Toppel for assistance evaluating your offer.

Remember, every step in this journey is a valuable experience. Keep your chin up, stay proactive, and don't be afraid to reach out to Toppel for career coaching support when needed.

You've got this!

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP

1 CONFIRM DETAILS

Review Your Offer Letter: Make sure you understand the start date, work hours, dress code, and any other important details.

Contact Your Supervisor: Reach out to confirm your start date, time, and location. Ask about any materials or documents you need to bring on your first day.

3 RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Deepen Your Understanding: Continue researching the company's history, culture, and recent news. This will help you feel more prepared and engaged from day one.

Learn About Your Team: If possible, find out who you'll be working with and their roles within the company.

5 PLAN YOUR COMMUTE

Test the Route: If you're commuting to an office, practice your route to ensure you know how long it takes and any potential delays.

Consider Alternatives: Have a backup plan in case of transportation issues.

7 SET GOALS

Define Your Objectives: Think about what you want to achieve during your internship. Setting clear goals can help you stay focused and make the most of your experience.

Plan for Feedback: Be ready to seek and act on feedback to improve your performance and grow in your role.

Congratulations on accepting your internship role! Now, what should you do between the time you accept the offer and your start date? Here are some key steps to ensure you're ready to hit the ground running on your first day.

2 ORGANIZE YOUR PAPERWORK

Complete Required Forms: Fill out any necessary paperwork, such as tax forms or direct deposit details, before your start date.

Prepare Identification Documents: Have your ID, social security card, or other required documents ready for your first day.

4 SKILL UP

Review Relevant Skills: Brush up on any skills or software that will be crucial for your role. This could include taking online courses or reviewing relevant materials.

Read Up on Industry Trends: Stay informed about the latest developments in your industry to bring valuable insights to your internship.

6 PREPARE YOUR WARDROBE

Build a Professional Wardrobe: Ensure you have enough professional attire that aligns with the company's dress code.

Plan Your First Week's Outfits: Having your outfits ready in advance can help reduce first-day stress.

By taking these steps, you'll be well-prepared and confident as you begin your internship, setting the stage for a successful and valuable experience.

INTERNSHIP BUDGET WORKSHEET

Creating a budget is an essential step to ensure you manage your finances effectively during your internship. Use this comprehensive template to plan your anticipated expenses and financial resources.

INCOME TOTAL				\$	
Internship Stipend/Salary	\$	Scholarships/Grants		\$	
Part-Time Job Earnings	\$	Savings		\$	
Parental Support	\$	Other Sources of Income		\$	
EXPENSES TOTAL				\$	
HOUSING TOTAL				\$	
Rent	\$	Internet/Cable		\$	
Utilities (Electricity, Water, Gas)	\$	Renter's Insurance		\$	
TRANSPORTATION TOTAL				\$	
Car Maintenance/Gas/Parking	\$	Air Fare		\$	
Public Transit Pass	\$	Ride Sharing		\$	
FOOD TOTAL				\$	
Groceries	\$	Snacks		\$	
Dining Out	\$	Coffee		\$	
PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE TOTAL				\$	
Work Attire	\$	Office Supplies		\$	
Networking Events	\$	Professional Development Course		\$	
PERSONAL EXPENSE TOTAL				\$	
Cell Phone	\$	Entertainment/Streaming Service		\$	
Gym Membership	\$	Personal Care		\$	
SAVING GOALS TOTAL				\$	
Short-term Savings	\$	Long-term Savings		\$	
NET INCOME CALCULATION (INCOME - EXPENSES - SAVINGS)				\$	
Total Income	\$	Total Expenses	\$	Total Savings	\$

How does your budget look?

I'll have more earnings than expenses

I'll have more expenses than earnings

Using this worksheet will help you stay on top of your finances, making your internship experience more manageable and less stressful.

INTERNSHIP FUNDING

To help you reduce any financial challenges you may experience during your internship period, we encourage you to explore internship funding opportunities offered by the University of Miami Toppel Career Center and your School/College. Learn more below.

Toppel Career Center

[The Mark and Maureen Angelo Family Endowment Fund](#) at the Toppel Career Center (also known as The Angelo Family Endowment Fund) aims to support University of Miami undergraduate students as they pursue high-quality internships that foster their career exploration by reducing financial challenges.

Through the generosity of The Angelo Family and members of the University of Miami Parents Council, we are able to offer competitive awards of \$500 up to \$3000 for undergraduate students who accept unpaid or underpaid internship opportunities during summer semesters.

Additional Internship Funding

In addition to the internship funding offered by Toppel, we encourage you to speak to your Cane Navigator and faculty in your academic college to inquire if internship funding is offered by your school/college at the University of Miami.

When you are unable to receive internship funding for unpaid or underpaid internships, there still may be alternative options to consider. Some students choose to work part-time at both an internship site and paid job so they don't have to pass up on the internship opportunity.

THINKING ABOUT REACHING OUT TO EMPLOYERS FOR INTERNSHIPS? HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

Before Applications:



Introduce Yourself: Start by introducing yourself. Mention where you're studying, your major, and the position you're interested in.



Attach Your resume/CV: Include your resume/CV with your email to provide more information about your skills and experiences.



Craft a Personalized Email: Write a personalized email expressing your interest in the internship position and why you're a good fit.



Research the Company: Look up the company and find the right contact person for your application. Check for any existing connections to professionals at the company where you're interested in interning (e.g., UM alumni)

After Applications:



Wait for a bit, then follow up with a polite email if you haven't heard back after a week or two.



Ask about the status of your application and reiterate your interest.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:

Curious about informational interviews? They're opportunities to learn about jobs and professions, helping you understand industries, build connections, and gain workplace insights. Prepare by researching the person and industry beforehand. Need help with questions? Check out this [guide](#).

Reach out to professionals in the company and ask for a quick chat to learn about their career path and the company.

Inquire about the possibility of a facility tour. Use the tour as an opportunity to gain insights into the work environment, culture, and day-to-day operations of the company.

[Job shadowing](#) lets you observe professionals at work, offering immersive learning and aiding in career decisions, with varying durations and experiences enhancing understanding within your field of interest.

WHAT IS TIP?

The Toppel Internship Program (TIP) offers a free opportunity to earn academic credit for your internship. This 1-credit notation counts towards your overall credits but does not affect graduation credits or GPA. Your school or college may offer a credit-bearing class that counts towards graduation credits. We recommend you discuss with your Cane Navigator/ Dean.

For more information or to register for TIP visit our [website](#).

DURING INTERNSHIP

Congratulations! Your first day at your new internship is approaching and you are eager to get started. Because internships are often brief, it is important that you take advantage of this opportunity to learn, grow, and move forward in your career journey. We have some tips for you to consider to make the most of the time you have.

It is important to understand that not all internships are built the same. Some companies have established intern programs with experienced supervisors. For others, this might be the organization's first time hosting an intern. For those internship programs that have less structure and guidance, stay tuned for strategies on how to take initiative and speak up, because you may need to advocate for yourself more.

HOW TO SHOW UP

Your internship expectations may be communicated to you directly or might be inferred indirectly as you observe what other employees do.




If there are ever any gray areas, it is important to ask your supervisor so that you can ensure you are meeting your organization's expectations.

What are some expectations that you would like to know more about during your first week?

First Week

The first week on the job is going to likely be overwhelming. You will be meeting tons of new people, learning the ins and outs of the organization, figuring out policies and procedures, and understanding your role. This is why we highly recommend taking notes as much as possible so that you can go back and process this information later and not forget any crucial details.

On the flip side, if your organization wants you to hit the ground running and gives little to no instructions, we recommend you set up a meeting with your supervisor during your first week to discuss the following:

 <p>Goals for the internship</p> <p>Are there any goals that you would like me to accomplish during this internship?</p>	 <p>Deliverables</p> <p>What projects and tasks should I focus on? When are their due dates? How would you like me to provide these to you?</p>	 <p>Communication</p> <p>Do you have any expectations for how often I communicate with you on my progress? Do you prefer communication in email or in person?</p>
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A few other steps you should take during the first week include:

- **Introduce yourself.** If meeting the team is not part of your official onboarding, you need to take initiative and do this yourself. Walk around the office and say hello to people when you have a moment.
- **Ask questions.** If something is unclear to you or you'd like more context, feel free to ask questions to your supervisor and colleagues. It shows you are interested in what you are learning and helps prevent future mistakes.

IN PERSON VS REMOTE

When you're an in-person intern, it is much easier to gain a sense of expectations and culture because you can utilize all of your senses to take in information about your new organization. Your random conversations with coworkers as you navigate your office can also provide a lot of new information and make you feel a sense of belonging right away. If you are a remote intern, it may be more challenging to get information and bond initially, but it can be done! Here are some additional tips for how to start strong during a remote internship:

- If the internship has very flexible hours, block time on your calendar each day for you to tackle projects. This will keep you organized.
- Treat the internship as if you were in person. Show up to meetings on time, and be prepared. Dress how other employees dress, even if they are in person and you are remote.
- Try to set up getting-to-know-you meetings with your colleagues whom you will be working with. Utilize your organization's communication channels to connect.

HOW TO STAND OUT

Doing a great job as an intern can lead to offers for additional internship and full-time roles from your organization. That is one great reason to stand out! Additionally, if you do well, it will build your positive reputation which can help you for future opportunities if you need a referral or recommendation. It's not just about who you know, it's about who knows you.

A great job means doing more than just the minimum of what is expected of you. Sure, meeting your assigned expectations is important, but how can you go beyond to really make an impression?

First, don't try to overdeliver if you are not yet meeting your regular, priority tasks. You need to execute your regular responsibilities free from error before adding to your plate. However, once you feel like you have a handle on your role, it can greatly benefit you to show initiative, take leadership, and volunteer for additional responsibilities. Consider these questions:

1. *Am I finished with my tasks and don't have anything to do next? Can I ask my supervisor or a teammate if they need help with anything?*
2. *Are there any gaps or problems at my organization that no one has had the time to get to that I might be able to help with?*
3. *Do I have any ideas that I think might benefit my organization that I can share with a supervisor for feedback?*

Remember, this is why it is so important to understand your expectations clearly in the first weeks of your role. If you don't know what is expected of you and don't match your supervisor's vision of what they want, it will be hard to stand out positively.

DID YOU KNOW?

Luckily, there is a lot of research already about what employers expect to see from their employees more broadly. Taking actions to continue growing in these eight essential skills will help you not only during this experience but in any other work experience you have in the future.

Here are the eight essential skills you can develop to stand out:

Career & Self-Development	Critical Thinking	Leadership	Teamwork
Communication	Equity & Inclusion	Professionalism	Technology

Check out our [website](#) if you want to see some specific actions that you can take to showcase these skills to your employers such as making decisions and solving problems using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgment (critical thinking) or promptly informing relevant others when needing guidance with assigned tasks (communication).

If you feel like any of these essential skills are currently lacking, we highly recommend some skill building resources to help you get started. [LinkedIn Learning](#) has a number of free courses you can take that help to build these skills.

HOW TO LEARN

Goal Setting

During the first few weeks, you should solidify your own goals about what you want to learn and gain from the internship experience. We recommend making these goals SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timebound) so that you can hold yourself more accountable for achieving them. Your goals might very well change during the internship as you discover new insights and take on new tasks.

Remember to let your supervisor know about the goals you are hoping to achieve so they can support you during the process. Use these goal-setting questions to help you get started:

- What is a goal that will help you to explore? Exploring is all about discovering career pathways.
- What is a goal that will help you to prepare? Preparing is all about getting ready for the world of work.
- What is a goal that will help you to connect? Connecting is all about meeting people and getting involved in organizations that will grow into your own professional network.

Learning will happen naturally as you work on your projects and gain exposure to your organization and industry. However, there are actions you can take to enhance the learning that takes place. Here are some examples:

Organizational Training & Professional Development

Many organizations offer free training and professional development that you can take advantage of as an employee. Are there seminars or talks being offered? Online educational platforms? Industry-events? Take advantage of all that is being offered to you.

Making Connections to Others

Connecting with your coworkers is important for many reasons, especially learning. Try to attend as many networking events as possible that your organization hosts to build connections with your team. You will likely have plenty of opportunities to bond with your fellow interns, but it might be harder to gain exposure to senior colleagues which is why these events can be important. Those getting-to-know-you meetings mentioned earlier don't only need to be for introducing yourself. They can also be a powerful learning tool. Request meetings with coworkers if they are working on a project you would like to learn more about.

Expose Yourself to Different Departments and Projects

Again, internships are brief. The larger the organization you are part of, the less exposure you may get to other aspects of the organization that are not connected to what you do. If any of those other areas interest you, take initiative and ask your supervisor if they would be okay with you shadowing in a different area to learn more about how it works and relates to what you are doing. This is a great way to get a fuller picture of how the organization works together.

Learn from Mistakes

Even seasoned full-time professionals make mistakes. As an intern who is new to the organization, it is likely you may make a few mistakes yourself. Although most people don't wish to make a mistake, keep in mind that they can be powerful learning experiences. To start, when you make a mistake, it is crucial that you handle it immediately and inform the need-to-know people at your organization to keep them in the loop. When speaking to your colleagues, remember it is crucial to take full responsibility for any mistakes made and let them know what you did (or are planning on doing) to fix the situation. After everything is settled, reflect on what you learned from this situation.

- Why did this mistake occur?
- What can I do in the future so that it does not occur again?

Then, apply the lessons learned.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR INTERNSHIP ISN'T MEETING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

After putting in all that work to find an internship and beginning your experience, you start to feel like this isn't the greatest fit. The excitement is gone, things aren't going quite as expected, and you're not really feeling the position as much as you believed you would. What now? – Should I quit? Should I continue and just keep going as is? Should I talk to someone about this?

When your internship isn't meeting your expectations, it can be challenging to know how to proceed. Here are some things to consider that can help you navigate this situation effectively:

ASSESS THE SITUATION

Identify the issues

- Create a Pros and Cons List: Create a list of what you enjoy and what you don't. This can help clarify the specific issues you're facing.
- Create a Problems and Solutions List: Identify problems and brainstorm potential solutions.

Ask yourself why the internship isn't going as expected:

- Reflect on your expectations and why they aren't being met.
- Realistic vs. Unrealistic Expectations: Were your expectations realistic? Were you expecting too much too soon?
- Duties & Responsibilities: Are there too many duties? Not enough duties?
- Type of tasks: Are the tasks you're assigned aligned with your goals and interests?
- Learning Opportunities: Are you gaining valuable skills and knowledge?
- Work Environment: How does the company's culture affect your experience?
- Is the internship not aligned with what you signed up for?
- Is it just not what you expected?

HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- Request a meeting: Schedule a time to discuss your concerns with your supervisor or internship coordinator.

Potential discussion points:

- Goals & Expectations: Clarify what you hope to achieve during the internship and the company's expectations.
- Workload: If overwhelmed, discuss reducing tasks. If underworked, request more responsibilities.
- Task Preferences: Express interest in different tasks or projects that align more closely with your goals.
- Interdepartmental Work: Ask if you can collaborate with other departments to diversify your experience.

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

The thought of having difficult conversations, as an intern, with your supervisor can be daunting. Here are some strategies that can help in these situations:

PREPARATION

Think and Practice: Plan what you want to say and rehearse it.

Gather Evidence: Collect examples to support your points.

TIMING AND SETTING

Choose the Right Moment: Find an appropriate time and place for the discussion.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Honesty and Respect: Be truthful but respectful.

Active Listening: Listen to your supervisor's perspective.

Propose Solutions: Offer constructive suggestions.

Collaborative Approach: Work together to find a solution.

ACTION STEPS

Work Together: Collaborate with your supervisor to implement steps for improving your experience.

CHANGING YOUR MINDSET

It's okay to feel disappointed. Going through an internship search, with all its complexities and nuances can be overwhelming. That can be amplified when you found and got hired for an internship you were really excited about and things don't go as expected. Take some time to settle in. When you're ready, here are some ways to shift your mindset and try to make the best out of your internship experience:

Seek support

- Colleagues and Mentors: Reach out for advice and support.
- Family and Friends: Discuss your feelings and seek encouragement.

Stay focused and determined

- Goals Alignment: Keep your long-term goals in mind.
- Best Effort: Continue to perform your duties to the best of your ability.

Build your resilience

- Stay Positive: Maintain a positive attitude even when things are tough.
- Value of Experience: Recognize that understanding what you don't want to do is just as valuable as knowing what you do want.

Understand every experience may not be perfect

- Finding out an experience isn't what you expected isn't necessarily a bad thing. Figuring out what you don't want to do, is just as important as figuring out what you want to do. This experience could save you time down the road.

REFLECT ON YOUR EXPERIENCE

Leverage the experience:

- Transferable Skills: Identify and document the skills you've gained.
- Resume Enhancement: Add these skills to your resume and LinkedIn profile.

Seek additional opportunities:

- Take Initiative: Volunteer for additional projects or responsibilities to broaden your experience.

RESIGNING FROM YOUR INTERNSHIP

If you've exhausted all options and still don't feel this internship experience is the right fit, it may be best to resign from your internship.

Exhaust all options:

- Ensure you've tried all possible solutions before deciding to resign.

Resignation process:

- Two Weeks' Notice: Provide at least two weeks' notice to your employer.
- Professionalism: Thank them for the opportunity and leave on good terms.

Navigating an internship that doesn't meet your expectations requires a proactive and thoughtful approach. By assessing the situation, communicating effectively, seeking support, and reflecting on the experience, you can turn a challenging situation into a valuable learning opportunity. If, after exhausting all options, you decide to resign, do so professionally, maintaining bridges and keeping the door open for future opportunities.

POST-INTERNSHIP

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR INTERNSHIP IS OVER

Whew, you made it! After searching for internships, applying, interviewing, accepting, and working, your internship is over. What should you do now? Below are some steps to consider taking once your internship is complete.

Thank You Notes

Thank your mentors, advisors, and coworkers who helped you during your time at the internship.

Reflect

Reflect on lessons learned, skills gained, project accomplishments, and connections built.

Identify and acknowledge your strengths.

- Document – Write down specific examples. This can be helpful for updating your resume and future interviews.
- Reflect on Learning - Think about what new skills you gained during your internship. For example: technical skills, industry-specific knowledge, or power skills (AKA essential skills).
- Feedback – Consider any feedback you received from your supervisor or colleagues that highlighted any new skills you developed.

Update professional documents

Update your master resume with detailed accomplishment statements (AKA bullet points) based on experiences you had and projects you completed during the internship.

- Check out our [Resume and Cover Letter Guide](#) for help with updating your resume.

Update LinkedIn experiences section

- Review our [LinkedIn Profile Checklist](#) for guidance.

An internship is a great stepping stone. You can leverage the experience, knowledge gained, and connections made to your advantage for future opportunities. The following sections will give some tips on how to utilize your experience after your internship is completed.

USE THE INTERNSHIP TO SELL YOURSELF DURING YOUR NEXT INTERVIEW

When you interview for your next internship or job, it will be beneficial to showcase your skills and accomplishments gained from past internships. The following exercise will help you generate memorable stories you can share:

Interview Story Exercise:

1. Describe the situation. Set the scene, and give any important contextual details.
2. Highlight the task. What was the task you needed to accomplish or the challenge you needed to face?
3. Describe your actions. What approach did you take? Focus on your specific actions rather than what the group did, when possible. Mention specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that were utilized.
4. End with the results. How does the story end? Were any of the results tangible or quantifiable? Focus on positive endings or lessons learned.
5. What competencies does this story demonstrate? Hint: For what topics could this story be used for?

MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONNECTIONS

Hopefully you made some strong connections to your coworkers and fellow interns during your internship experience. It is recommended that you continue to maintain these connections over time. You never know when you may want to reach out to them again. These connections could also become future recommenders for your next opportunity.

At a minimum, we recommend you connect to your new contacts on [LinkedIn](#). LinkedIn is a great tool for maintaining a relationship over time because it captures when your contacts switch jobs and move to new locations. This is better than only having an email address in case the contact leaves that organization.

For more resources, visit our website: www.hireacane.miami.edu.